

"THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR."

All the Year Round

A Weekly Journal

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LOUIS DRAYCOTT.

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CHAPTER II. THE BIRTH OF THE NEW.

THE mental tonic has been of excellent benefit, which shows how good a thing it is, upon occasion, to break a rule. My rule has been kept so long, and so strictly, that it costs somewhat in the breaking. Hard work and I have dwelt together year by year in close and loving companionship.

Thank Heaven for hard work, and plenty of it! Where should I have been without it? What bitter memories would have gathered about me, fungus-like, poisoning the very springs of life, if it had not been for hard work! How would my energies have been paralysed; how would my morbid and vengeful impulses have drifted me at their baneful will whither they would, if it had not been for the work which thrust itself daily and hourly before me, crying out to be done, and well done! Thank Heaven that I listened to that imperative demand, and cast out the demons that for one bad, bitter, hopeless spell possessed me.

And now, John Mogeridge, my friend, I owe thee much!

For I have done well to break my rule of solitude to-day. I am refreshed—strengthened. Yesterday I was conscious of possible flagging; to-night, I am ready for anything—"my own man" again, as the saying goes. Like a person who abstains from wine for years, and then takes a single glass, I am exceptionally stirred by what to another would seem as nothing.

I have been, or seem to have been, in a world new, strange, beautiful. In this

world I have called out sympathy for Bessy and little Bob—a sympathy better and more helpful than mine, because it is all womanly. In this world I have met reality and truth—I have touched hands with them; I have listened to their clear voices, and met their sweet and candid glances.

Yet this new world of mine would seem but a commonplace paradise when described.

It was in an unpretending street, a street, just now, bare enough, since its window-boxes are empty and its virginian-creepers leafless.

The welcome quiet of a fire in the dim, grey afternoon light, the touch of a hand smooth and soft as that of a girl, welcomed me to the particular house in this street which had been indicated by my sister's letter. In such a manner did I greet, and in such surroundings did I find, the Miss Birt, who had been "so good to dearest Janey when she had her accident at Weston-super-Mare." It seemed to me as though that modest parlour held a sort of summer all its own, the sweeter and the brighter for the chill and gloom outside; while, by way of presiding genius, Miss Birt, a veritable fairy godmother, stood enshrined.

She was a little old lady, a good way on what is called the "wrong side of sixty;" but with her could be no wrong side of anything, since all was perfect of its kind. Her features were small and fine; her face lined; but the cheeks softly pink like the inside of a sea-shell, and the eyes had never grown old. On either side of this dear old face were curls of snow-white hair, and a setting of delicate lace finished off the whole.

But all this is like describing the colour

and aspect of a blossom, while the subtle sweetness of its perfume escapes you.

There was a gentle but persistent earnestness about Miss Birt that caught and held you. Very quickly you realised that meeting with her was no casual greeting that would pass out of memory and leave no mark, no sign upon your life. It was not a thing to come across and be carelessly cast aside. Rather were you conscious of regret that so steadfast and helpful a spirit had been in the world so long and you had known it not.

We sat on either side of the fire, which shone the brighter for the increasing gloom outside. As the flame glittered it caught the black, round eye of a stuffed parrot in a case, set far back in a recess, so that the creature seemed to blink craftily at me.

With quiet insistence I was detained. I had meant to pay an ordinary call; but time sped; the gloom deepened without, while light and happiness seemed to radiate the brighter within.

Ere long came the cheerful clatter of tea-cups, and candles were lighted in two old-fashioned sconces that stood one on either side the mantel-shelf. I had stepped out of the old life in the sombre rooms surrounded by blank prison walls, into something new and strange. Perhaps also, in her graceful hospitality to me, was something new and strange to Miss Birt. I do not think visitors are common at Prospect Place. I think a new acquaintance is a rare thing. At all events I caught more than one enquiring glance from the ancient servant who brought in tea, and had to be sent out a second time for an extra cup. This servant was a hard-featured woman, as old as, or older than her mistress. Her mouth was a line; her eyes deep-set and keen, peering at me, not without suspicion, as I thought, from under white and shaggy brows.

"Kezia," said Miss Birt, "this gentleman is little Miss Janey's uncle."

"Is he, now?" said Kezia, with an air as of one who would say: "It pleases the gentleman to say so, but—who knows how things may be?"

A faint flush rose to the cheeks of Kezia's mistress, as she took her place at the tea-table and tried to look sternly at her retainer. But the effort was lost on Kezia, who set forth an array of toast and delicate slices of bread-and-butter without once raising her eyes from her work.

"We seem to be treating you very un-

ceremoniously, Mr. Draycott," said my hostess; then, with a pretty hesitation and shyness she added: "But your sister has told me so much about you, that I seem to know and—like you—almost as if you were an old friend.

"I seem to know so much about your work among those poor people in the prison," continued Miss Birt, a dewy brightness as of rising tears shining in her eyes.

Here, I felt, was my opening to bring in Bessy and little Bob; and Miss Birt let her tea grow cold as she listened, absorbed, to the story of John Mogeridge and of those he had left behind.

From a little restless movement of the head, a motion of the hands, I could tell that she would have liked to be up and doing without delay; to have put on her bonnet there and then and set off to speak kind words of comfort to Bessy and pet little Bobby. If anything can soften to tears the hard, strained brightness of the poor widow's eyes, surely it must be the ministrations of this gentle soul, I was thinking, when there came the click of a latch-key in the passage door, a footfall along the oilcloth, and then the entry of a whiff of cold air and briny fog together with that of a square-set, broad-shouldered young fellow, with a face quaintly, yet not unattractively, like that of a terrier dog.

Miss Birt was on her feet in a moment, helping him off with his great-coat, setting his neck-tie straight, looking, too, very much as if she would have liked to run her busy fingers through the short, tawnycurls that clustered on his head.

"This is my dear nephew, Dumphie—I should say, Mr. McGregor. Dumphie, this is Mr. Draycott, little Janey's uncle, don't you know, dear?"

"Well, I didn't know till you told me, Aunt Dacie; but I am glad to know, and glad to see Mr. Draycott," said a mellow, cheery voice that it did one good to hear; and a hearty grasp met mine—a grasp that seemed to tell you a great deal about the man who gave it.

Nothing could be more charming than to hear Miss Birt interesting this nephew of hers in Bessy and Bobby. And while she spoke—I chiming in with a word now and again, the young man listened, even at times eagerly, yet with an absent air at times, touching meanwhile the breast-pocket of his coat as though reminding himself of some treasure that lay there in ambush.

With an alacrity she had by no means shown when attending upon me, the hard-featured servant brought in various fresh viands, catching, as I could see, fragments of Miss Birt's discourse, and giving an eye at me as who should say :

"I hope this is not a pack of lies you've been telling my mistress, Mr. Who-ever-you-are; for she's too good a lady to be played tricks with, I can tell you."

Conscious rectitude supported me under these unfriendly glances, and I felt an inward conviction that the day would come when Kezia—for by that old-world name I heard Miss Birt address her—would do me truer justice.

I noted slight signs of ill-concealed trouble in "Dumphie," as Miss Birt's narrative of John Mogeridge, Bessy, and little Bobby, came to an end; and then, of a sudden resolve.

"I have heard from Glennie to-day, Aunt Dacie," he said, pulling forth a foreign-looking letter from the pocket I before spoke of. "They have had a brush out there in Zululand."

Miss Birt pushed her chair back from the table, set down her tea-cup, and caught her breath quickly.

"A brush?" she said, faintly. "Dumphie—Dumphie—do you mean a battle?"

"Yes, dear," returned the other, tenderly putting his strong young arm round her shoulders, and apparently forgetting my existence entirely, and speaking to her as if their respective ages were reversed, and he by far the elder of the two. "A sharp one, too; but Glennie is all right. And listen to what he says—what fine news he sends us: 'Tell Aunt Dacie it is all over, and I'm "quite perzackly." Tell her, too, that I hear I'm to be mentioned in the General's despatches. That will cheer her up, and help her to be less frightened.'

It helped her to something else as well, for she suddenly put her hands before her face and broke into tears.

"Oh, Dumphie," she sobbed, "my dear, dear boy—if only my brother had been alive, what a proud man he would be this day!"

For the moment I was puzzled by the difference of names amongst these good people; but before long I learnt that they were connected only by what are called "ties of marriage;" ties, in their case, ten times more strong and tender than other people's ties of blood—that Dumphie and Glennie

were Aunt Dacie's nephews, only because they had been her brother's step-sons.

Half laughing, half crying, Miss Birt began to explain these things to me, Dumphie chiming in, glad, I could see, that the old lady's thoughts should be diverted from that "brush" out in Zululand.

"When Glennie says he is 'quite perzackly,' he is quoting an old family joke, you know, Mr. Draycott. He was so small, when he used to say that, that it was as much as he could do, the dear child, to get up the door-steps by himself; but he would never have any one to help—never; so you see he was always a determined character was Glennie, and a destined soldier from the beginning. I expect he makes short work with those creatures out there." But here the tender heart of the speaker smote her on behalf of the "creatures," and she added: "Not but what I dare say they have their good points, poor, misguided things."

It appeared, by-and-by, that Dumphie and Glennie did not stand alone in the affection of Aunt Dacie, for I heard of two youngsters who were spoken of as "our sailors," and was introduced to a picture of two bonnie lads, as like as two peas—which was natural enough, since they were twins—shoulder to shoulder, dressed as became young middies, with smart, gold-laced caps and jackets, and two round, solemn, big-eyed faces, each with a look of Dumphie, yet with a difference.

"Stephen and John are away with their ship now, out in the Indian Seas. They like being there because their father loved the East, and used to talk to them about it when they were even such little fellows, no higher than the table. He served there many, many years; and, when their mother died, he went back to his old haunts and died there of a broken heart. There had never been anything so good in his life before as Lucille, and, when the good was gone, he could not bear the burden of his life without it, and just laid it down. We are people who have had a great deal of trouble, Mr. Draycott; but the troubles have been cords, I think, to draw the rest of us closer and closer together."

At this Aunt Dacie covered her eyes with her hand a moment, as one who returns thanks to Heaven for mercies given; and I felt as if the little room were a church, so solemn and so sweet was the atmosphere all about me.

So had I known trouble—bitter, biting

trouble, but it had not made me feel like that.

I had had to bear it all alone; not blamelessly, either, as this simple soul had borne her cross; and it had made me wicked, and defiant, unruly, rebellious, bitter. Its voice—even in memory, seemed a harsh and grating cry beside the soft, low wail of hers.

It was quaint enough to hear her talk of the small house, with its garden, and simple dwelling-rooms, as some chatelaine might speak of an ancestral domain. She told me of an ancient poplar-tree in the garden that was the pride of the place; shorn of its glory now, it is true, and bare and brown enough, but “a sight to see” when spring should stir the sap in its old veins, and green and gold traceray make it once again “a thing of beauty.” I could see that I was expected to adopt the poplar, and did so on the spot. I entered into the spirit of pride in its possession, so that one might have thought its shade had sheltered me from childhood’s earliest hour. Real earnestness is a thing few can withstand; certainly not I, for one. I began to be conscious of a bewildering feeling that I had passed through this phase of life before. I was even ready to fancy that I could anticipate what Miss Birt was going to say.

“We have made great improvements in the place, of late years,” said Aunt Dacie, speaking with a certain dignity as became the subject; and looking round the cosy parlour complacently; “there used to be a great chandelier right in the middle of this room—an eyesore I assure you, Mr. Draycott. At least, as the young people grew up they thought it so, and now I really think these ancient sconces, which Dumphie here picked up for a mere song in a second-hand shop in the City, give us quite a mediæval appearance, don’t they?”

I learnt many things before I left: that the parrot’s name, in life, had been Poly-anthus; that the bird had belonged to a lady whom Miss Birt spoke of as Sister Charlotte—shading her face a moment with a slender hand as she named her, just as you may see a child cover its eyes to say grace—a gesture that led me to the conclusion that Sister Charlotte, as well as that dear brother of whom Miss Birt had spoken, was dead; and that Aunt Dacie was the sole remaining representative of the older generation.

Other things I gathered—such as that a great trouble had come and gone—been

lived through, or lived down, and had bound Aunt Dacie and her nephew, Dumphie, very closely together—closer, indeed, than many who are mother and son. I seemed to know intuitively that this trouble had been kept from touching the younger members of the family, as much as possible; and that the present position in life of the two young sailors and of Glennie was owing to the devotions and exertions of Dumphie.

I gathered that, while being a son to Aunt Dacie, some one had been like a young sort of father to the youngsters, and that this some one was Dumphie.

I gathered that—toiling hard in City life himself, the bread-winner, the helper, the counsellor, the hope and stay of the rest—a man had garnered up all his pride in the social position of his younger brothers, himself content to take his stand upon the lower, but more lucrative commercial level from whence he could stretch out a generous hand to help them upwards and onwards, and that that self-forgetful man was Dumphie.

I gathered that all this had been done in such simplicity of mind, that no one would be more surprised to find it looked upon as anything out of the way than Dumphie himself . . . which harvest of observation shows how late I must have stayed at Prospect Place.

A strange and pleasant memory rises before my mind. It grows nearer and nearer, and clearer and clearer, as I dwell upon it.

I see a window up three wide, low steps, forming an alcove—a snug retreat, indeed, to read, or think, or “lazy” in—its casements looking out upon the fair academic city, with its glimpses of greenery and its stately colleges—in a word, the window of my old room at Merton. This alcove is big enough to hold a small round table, as well as seats; and there, upon that table, held firmly down by the elbow which I have placed upon it, lies a hasty, bold, and really clever sketch—no, caricature—of myself. Each point in my personal appearance has been caught, exaggerated, and made the most of.

There I am, tall, lantern-jawed, and gaunt; while underneath this precious work of art is neatly inscribed:

“Old Draycott—ten years hence.”

Opposite to me is a curly-pated, handsome lad, whose comely face, just at the present moment, is all one glowing blush. His blue eyes are full of shame; yet, as

they meet mine, I catch a gleam of fire lurking in their depths.

The blushing boy is young Hazledean of Corpus.

I am coaching young Hazledean of Corpus for his "mods."

"So that is what you think I shall be like ten years hence, is it?"

As I speak thus indifferently, and with a casual kind of air, I am still conscious of a certain mortification deep down in me somewhere.

I am full of high hopes. No shadow of what lies before me has as yet fallen across my life. I look upon myself as an ambitious sort of fellow, quite above such petty weaknesses as personal vanity. Nevertheless, that petty weakness is in me, and now it suffers; for I am conscious that young Hazledean of Corpus is decidedly clever with his pen, and has made a decidedly clever caricature of his coach.

And now, hurrying along on my way home to-night, agitated with ideas, thoughts, desires, longings, that were all new and strange to me, I passed a gin-palace—a foul, flaring thing at the corner of the street. There, in a mirror so placed as to double the glitter and glare of the lights, I saw, advancing to meet me, the gaunt, lantern-jawed individual drawn by a thoughtless boy in the far-off long ago—"Old Draycott, ten years hence." Yet, I am not old, and it is not ten years ago since I so oftentimes looked out from my window upon Merton Street.

We cannot count our lives by time. A man or woman may be well on in middle age, and yet be young in heart and feeling; and a crushing grief may make one old in a night.

Into two years—nay less—of my life has been pressed the anguish, the shame, the misery of twenty. Those two years did the work of twenty; and that is why I have grown to look like the "Old Draycott" evolved out of the inner consciousness of Hazledean of Corpus. Why have I not thought of this before? How is it that these changes have stolen upon me unnoticed and unmarked? My personality has been as a vesture, folded up and laid aside, which the moths have eaten without the owner's knowledge. Now, when I come to shake it out, and hold it out to the light, I see what the work of time had been!

By the way, I see I have forgotten here

to record the fact that there is a second Miss Birt, a young one—eighteen, or thereabouts.

She has a sweet, strange presence that, once seen, haunts the memory; her eyes are the eyes of a mystic in the face of a child. She is half-sister to Dumphie, and she calls him "brother," short and simple, as if there were no other brother in the world.

THE NICKNAMES OF THE "OLD MASTERS."

THE authorities of our National Gallery have recently introduced an innovation, which they may be supposed to regard as an improvement, in the shape of the abolition from many of the picture frames in the Trafalgar Square saloons, of those nicknames by which so many of the old Masters are habitually known.

At first sight, this change may appear defensible. It may be thought derogatory to the dignity of the great art of painting that its most illustrious exponents should figure in official catalogues and inscriptions, not under their own proper appellations, but under by-names capriciously bestowed, and sometimes conveying the suggestion of personality and contempt; and it may, perhaps, be argued that, even if those names are popularly used, they should not be authoritatively recognised by such an institution as the National Gallery, where absolute historical accuracy should be observed. It seems to us, however, that it is only at first sight that this new move can commend itself to our judgement.

There is an old classical proverb—which is familiar to many who are by no means classical scholars, for Lord Lytton has made English readers acquainted with it in the pages of "My Novel"—to the effect that "It is a pity to alter what does very well as it is;" and this proverb the authorities of the National Gallery might, with profit, have laid to heart before they meddled with the sobriquets of the great painters. Indeed, the alteration is to be deplored on two grounds: firstly, that, if persisted in, it will cause an immense amount of confusion without any adequate compensating advantage; and, secondly, because the increase of accuracy thereby secured is very much more fancied than real.

As regards the first point, it should be remembered that our National Gallery is

frequented—as it is intended it should be, and as it is much to be desired it should continue to be—not only by students and connoisseurs of painting, but by the great mass of the population, possessing, on the whole, little or no knowledge of art or art history, and that to deprive such visitors to the national collection of the only names by which they have ever heard of the old Masters, and replace them by a string of unfamiliar Italian patronymics, is of, to say the least of it, doubtful advantage to any interest concerned. Those names, nicknames though they may be, possess the prescriptive rights derived from three or four centuries' uninterrupted use, during which period they have been adopted with practical unanimity by compilers of catalogues and by engravers. To decree, in these latter days, their abolition in favour of any other system of nomenclature would be to court inevitable and hopeless confusion as to the identity of the painters and their works—a risk which it is surely not worth running unless the advantages to be set against it are certain and solid.

And, secondly, as regards the question of accuracy, it may sound somewhat paradoxical, but it is nevertheless the fact that these nicknames of the great painters were far more truly the "proper names" of those who bore them than were the surnames with which it is proposed to supply their place.

It must be remembered that in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries the use of surnames, as now understood, was by no means universal in Italy or in any other European country, and was, indeed, practically confined to the upper and upper-middle classes; the very possession of a surname implying that the family could boast of a settled position and a descent of at least some few generations.

Now, few of the old Italian Masters were of gentle birth—Michael Angelo, who was of the noble Florentine house of Buonarotti, and Leonardo da Vinci, who was the natural son of Ser Piero da Vinci, notary to the Signoria of Florence, were exceptions to the general rule. Many were not even of the middle classes, but were the sons of small tradesmen, of artisans, even of peasants; for, in the great republic of the arts, in those its palmiest days, there was no royal road to success, and merit was the only gauge. And, if we examine further into the matter, we shall find that the use of these nicknames, which are now to be proscribed, is sanctioned not merely by the

custom of posterity, but by contemporary authorities, and even by the painters themselves. Take the case of the great Master, who has been known for nearly four centuries as Andrea del Sarto. Vasari—whose celebrated work, "The Lives of the Painters," still remains, notwithstanding certain errors of judgement and inaccuracies of dates, the standard authority on the subject—writing some twenty years after the death of Andrea, whose friend and pupil he was, observes that his master's father was a tailor; "for which cause he was always called Andrea del Sarto by every one" ("sarto" and "sartore" being the Italian equivalent for the word tailor). Certain it is that on the "Holy Family," now in the Tribune of the Uffizi Gallery at Florence, which is accounted the finest of his easel pictures, he has so described himself in the Latin abbreviations, "And. Sar. Flo. Fab." which we may translate, "This is the work of Andrea del Sarto, the Florentine."

Again in the Latin inscription on the monument raised to his memory by his pupil and heir, Domenico Conti, in the Church of the Servites at Florence, his name figures as "Andrea Sartio;" and in this connection we may remark that throughout Vasari's long and careful biography of this Master, he makes no mention of his family name, and that it is only from an annotation that the reader will learn it to have been Vannucchio, "Andrea's father having been one Michelangelo Vannucchio, whence the painter styled himself, sometimes Andrea Vannucchio, sometimes Andrea d'Agnolo, or Di Michelagnolo Vannucchio, and in a receipt given to the Abess of Luco, Andrea d'Angiolo del Sarto." No sooner, however, has the reader possessed himself of this knowledge than up starts another commentator with the information that the artist's name was not Vannucchio at all, but merely Andrea d'Agnolo. The painter's monogram **X** is cited as corroborative evidence by both sides; the believers in Vannucchio maintaining it to represent an A intertwined with a V; the holders of the contrary opinion explaining it as two As, one inverted. Who, after this, can maintain that things are made any clearer, or more accurate by deserting the nickname for the patronymic!—surely the name which the artist himself inscribed upon his masterpiece, which his sorrowing friend placed upon his tomb, which his pupil and historian employs to the exclusion of any

other, is good enough for the use of posterity to the end of time. May we not hold that in erasing the name of "Del Sarto" and substituting that of "Vannucchio," we should be dethroning the certain for the problematical, the substance for the shadow?

If we consider the various sobriquets of the old Italian Masters we shall find them fall, as regards their origin, into three classes; that is to say, they are referable either to parentage, natural or adopted; to locality, such as birthplace or early residence; or to some distinguishing personal trait, either mental or physical. To the first of these classes belongs, besides Andrea del Sarto, whom we have already considered, the great Venetian painter, Tintoretto; a Master whose works—being chiefly of enormous size, and executed mostly in fresco on the walls of public buildings—are comparatively little known in this country, and, indeed, are not to be studied to perfection except in Venice. This artist again was called after the trade of his father, who was a dyer ("tintore" in Italian). His real name was Jacopo Robusti, but it is hard to believe that he was commonly so called by his contemporaries, for Vasari, writing during his lifetime (indeed, the author of the "Lives of the Painters" predeceased Tintoretto by some twenty years), invariably speaks of him by that nickname.

The name of the brothers, Antonio and Piero Pollaiuolo (the Italian for a "poulterer"), also signifies the calling of their father, or, as some hold, their grandfather, for the father was styled Jacopo del Pollaiuolo, the son of the poultreter; indeed, in this family we find no trace of any name save that of the trade; which is, we may note, a very common source of surnames in all countries, our own included, where we find such instances as Baker, Butcher, Cook, etc., and where the frequency of the name of Smith is referable to the days of armour and its makers.

The Pollaiulos were goldsmiths, painters, and sculptors of the early Florentine school; and at least one important work of Antonio's, "The Martyrdom of Saint Sebastian," is in our National Gallery.

We may now consider three Masters, who, dropping their own names, adopted from gratitude those of their first instructors in the paths of art.

We can all remember the aesthetic prig, immortalised for us by Mr. Du Maurier, who declared that he was always mute before a

Botticelli. What, we wonder, would have been the demeanour of this devotee of the now exploded cult if brought face to face with a work bearing the name of Alessandro Filipepi? Such, however, was the original name of that early Florentine Master, of whom several important examples—and notably one from Hamilton Palace—are to be found in our national collection. Alessandro's father, Mariano Filipepi, "a Florentine citizen, brought up his son with care," so Vasari tells us, "and caused him to be instructed in all such things as are usually taught to children before they choose a calling. But although the boy readily acquired whatever he wished to learn, yet was he constantly discontented; neither would he take any pleasure in reading, writing, or accounts, insomuch that the father, disturbed by the eccentric habits of his son, turned him over in despair to a gossip of his, called Botticello, who was a goldsmith, and considered a very competent master of his art, to the intent that the boy might learn the same." Out of gratitude to the goldsmith, who emancipated him from a life of ledgers and day-books, and opened to him the possibilities of art, the young Sandro adopted his name. Similarly the Bolognese Master, Francesco Francia, whose "Holy Family" and "Dead Christ" are among the finest treasures of the National Gallery, dropping his family name of Raibolini, adopted from gratitude that of Francia from his master in goldsmith's work; and Lorenzo di Credi, the son of Andrea Scarpelloni, assumed the appellation by which he became famous, both to his contemporaries and to posterity, from his teacher Maestro Credi, the Florentine goldsmith.

Of those painters who derived their nicknames from the place either of their birth or of their first celebrity in their art, the list might be indefinitely prolonged. It will suffice for our purpose to mention a few of the most important names. Piero Perugino—justly celebrated for his own works, but perhaps more celebrated as having been the master of Raphael—was the son of Cristofano Vannucci, and was born at Castello della Pieve, whence, in his eleventh year, he was sent to Perugia, and there acquired the first rudiments of his art. It appears from a contemporary inscription at Perugia, in which he is styled "Petrus Perusinus," that he was called "Perugino" in his lifetime; and surely no one ever deserved to be identified with a locality more than did this painter

with the city of his adoption. He invariably returned thither after his occasional absences in Florence and Rome, and during his long life he beautified its churches and public buildings with the choicest works of his genius.

Antonio Allegri, the son of Pellegrino Allegri, a man in very humble circumstances—a wood-cutter, according to some accounts—was born at Correggio, in the Duchy of Modena, and by the perfection of his art has rendered immortal the name of his birthplace, which he adopted as his own. Many of this great Master's works are in this country; but the finest are in Italy, and especially at Parma, where he spent the greater part of his life.

Of Francesco Mazzuoli, called "Il Parmigiano" from the fact that he was born in Parma, there is an admirable specimen in the National Gallery, namely, "The Vision of St. Jerome," originally painted for the Church of San Salvatore del Lauro at Citta di Castello.

Giulio Romano, the favourite pupil of Raphael, whose name Shakespeare, with his usual disregard of chronological accuracy, introduces alongside of the oracle of Delphi into "The Winter's Tale," was a native of Rome, of the name of Pippi. He was celebrated as a painter and as an architect; but the proficiency in sculpture with which our great dramatist credits him, appears to be another exercise of poetic license on the part of the "Swan of Avon."

Paul Veronese—whose fine painting of the "Family of Darius at the feet of Alexander" adorns the National Gallery, and whose "Marriage at Cana" is one of the chief glories of the Louvre—was Paolo Cagliari, born at Verona, but, as a painter, of the Venetian school.

The name of Il Spagnoletto denotes the Spanish origin of José Ribera, born at Xativa, in Valencia. He went early to Italy, studied under Caravaggio, and was a prominent member of the Neapolitan School.

The great French landscape-painter, whom we usually call Claude, but, sometimes, from the province of his birth, Claude Lorraine, was really named Claude Gelée, the son of poor parents, who originally apprenticed him to a pastry-cook. After receiving some instruction from his own brother, who was a wood-engraver, he managed to reach Rome, where he became cook and colour-grinder to a painter named Tassi, and so worked

his way upwards to the very foremost place among landscape-painters in the history of art.

When we come to consider the names derived from personal peculiarities, we find instances to which the word "nickname" is far more applicable than to any of the foregoing cases. Take the example of Masaccio, otherwise Tommaso, son of the notary, Ser Giovanni di Monte (Simone) Guidi, called "Della Scheggia." Of this painter, Vasari tells us that, "He was remarkably absent and careless of externals, as one who, having fixed his whole mind and thought on art, cared little for himself or his personal interests . . . insomuch that he would give no thought to his clothing, nor was he ever wont to require payment from his debtors, until he was first reduced to the extremity of want; and for all this, instead of being called Tommaso, which was his name, he received from every one the cognomen of Masaccio, by no means for any vice of disposition, since he was goodness itself, but merely from his excessive negligence and disregard of himself; for he was always so friendly to all, so ready to oblige and do service to others, that a better or kinder man could not possibly be desired."

This nickname is, of course, merely a corruption of the painter's Christian name, arrived at by dropping the first syllable of Tommaso and adding an affix indicative of contemptuous disapprobation, more or less good-humoured. The Italian language is rich in these terminations bearing a special significance.

Such, though of just the opposite import to the sobriquet of poor Masaccio, was the name of Giorgione, which was bestowed upon the great Venetian Master, Giorgio Barbarella, of Castelfranco, "as well," we are told, "from the character of his person as for the exaltation of his mind," and was, therefore, of complimentary import.

The diminutives, Il Pinturicchio—meaning "the little painter"—and Domenichino, by which Bernardino Betti and Dominico Zampieri were respectively known, are probably signs of affectionate regard; while the by-name of Guercino commemorates the fact that Gianfrancesco Barbieri was afflicted with a squint. By the name of Sebastiano del Piombo, we are reminded that that great Venetian Master, during the latter part of his life, held the appointment at Rome of "Frate del Piombo," or Monk of the Signet, the functionary to whom was confided the duty

of appending the seals of lead—"piombo" being the Italian word for lead—to the official documents of the Papal See. This painter's family name was Luciani; but it is only on his earliest pictures that we find his patronymic; his later and best signed works bear the inscription, "Sebastianus Venetus," preceded—in the case of those executed subsequent to his appointment to the Signet—by the initial F (frate). This artist's great picture of the "Raising of Lazarus," in the National Gallery, possesses a special interest, apart from its distinguished artistic merit, from the fact that it was painted in rivalry of Raphael's "Transfiguration," now in the Vatican; and that Sebastiano is supposed to have received assistance in his task from no less a hand than that of Michael Angelo himself. Certain it is that there are in the British Museum two original drawings by Michael Angelo, which are evidently preparatory studies for the figure of Lazarus in Sebastiano's picture.

To pursue the matter further would be easy, but for considerations of space. Enough, however, has, perhaps, been said to show how little stress was laid by the old Masters themselves, or by their contemporaries, on those surnames which the authorities of the National Gallery wish to affix to their pictures. Indeed, we may note in passing that many painters, who never received nicknames, are ordinarily spoken of by their Christian names alone, so much so that it requires in some cases an effort of memory to recall their surnames; thus every one knows Michael Angelo, Raphael, and Titian, while to the comparatively few would the names of Buonarotti, Sanzio, and Vecellio, convey any definite meaning.

Surely we are not going too far in saying that we prefer even the most personal of the nicknames we have cited above. Besides the arguments we have already advanced as to the example of the artists themselves, their contemporaries, and the subsequent usage of succeeding ages, it seems to us that there are other good reasons against the proposed change—that it is better that we should be reminded that one artist was the son of a tailor, or of a dyer; that another was a sloven, or had a squint, than to have our memories burdened with some Italian patronymic of perhaps doubtful authenticity, which the painter alone has redeemed from absolute obscurity.

We seem to know these great workers and their works the better from possessing

these little details as to their appearance, their parentage, or their birthplace, which their nicknames, and their nicknames only, have preserved to us. At any rate, if their family names be considered worth preserving, let it be only as subsidiary to, and not in substitution for, those more familiar forms.

NAPLES IN PANORAMA.

IN TWO PARTS. PART I.

THE magic of the sunshine does such wonders for the plainest architecture in southern Italy, that the exteriors of most of the churches in Naples seem unimposing at the rare intervals when the sun does not appear. The builders cared little or nothing for Corinthian, Doric, Ionic, or Renaissance. Their edifices are crowded into corners on hill sides, or in populous thoroughfares in the valleys, where magnificent porticoes and imposing flights of steps are entirely out of the question. Often, the front wall of a church is not even protected by stucco; the primitive ugliness of the brick stares you in the face. Over the main entrance is a Rococo marble structure—a kind of religious coat-of-arms—now and then disfigured with gaudy colouring. The doors are provided with heavy quilted curtains, usually very old and dirty, to keep out the sun in summer and autumn, and the wind in winter. An unornamental fringe of beggars about the steps serves to strengthen the foreigner's unfavourable impression.

But within each church all is decorous, artistic, and rich. The weight of Catholicism makes itself thoroughly felt. There is nothing perfunctory, as in France and one or two other Catholic countries, about the devotions of the men; both male and female worshippers are in earnest.

I went into one church in the San Lorenzo quarter, on a week-day morning, and remained an hour for the purpose of observing the people. The shabby entrance had not prepared me for the vast and splendid hall, with its noble ceilings and its rich lateral chapels, into which I came. The paintings were more noteworthy for size than for quality; but the marbles were all good, and their number seemed legion. Many of these lateral chapels were the gifts of rich parishioners, and their descendants from generation to generation have vied with each other in adding memorial tablets, statues, and altars. In front of many of the chapels were women praying aloud in high,

cracked voices. Near the chief altar stood a majestic old man, dressed in a showy uniform partly covered by a cloak. He seemed a fixture; indeed, I do not think he moved his body while I was in the church. But I saw that his eyes followed all my movements.

Naples, as every one knows, is the city where people talk with their hands, and this they do in church as well as in market or in the drawing-room. I observed a singular instance of this in conjunction with the performance of the confessional.

On either side of the main aisle, in this church, were long rows of boxes, at the windows of which women were kneeling, pouring forth their real and imaginary sins to the directors of their consciences. The windows were so arranged that the priests sitting within the boxes could not see those who came to confess; but the front was open. In one of these boxes sat a priest in such a position that I could not see his face; but I was able to make out the whole tenor of his remarks to the woman under confession by the eloquent movements of his thin white hands, which peeped from his black sleeves and moved incessantly to and fro on the polished wood of the chair front. What astonishing variety of movement in these hands! The gestures were not made for the woman, who could not see them; they were the necessary accompaniments of the priest's speech, and, had his hands been tied, I doubt if he could have spoken at all.

Coquelin, the famous French actor, often appears in a little piece in which, for half-an-hour, he does not utter a word; but represents the injured and misunderstood husband, responding solely by various motions of his hands and arms to the impassioned and rather abusive monologue of his wife.

But this priest of Naples could have taught Coquelin many a lesson in gesture. I watched these white hands as they expressed deprecation, condemnation, surprise, pity, energy, authority; and I could not repress a smile when, at the close of the confession, the priest spread out his hands twelve or fifteen times in succession with wonderful rapidity, which I was certain meant the number of prayers that the good woman was to say in pursuit of some particular penance. Without once seeing the priest's face, it was easy to form an accurate idea of what manner of man he was.

In this quarter of San Lorenzo it was

evident that a great part of the population had material, as well as moral reasons for supporting the Church; for clearly the Church supported them. There are whole streets devoted to shops where images of the Saints and Martyrs, Bambinos and Madonnas, are made and sold. The quantity of these objects is so great that I should think every worshipper in Naples must possess at least a dozen. The tastes and purses of all classes are consulted. There are Madonnas of huge proportions, and little ones which may be purchased for a few soldi. The colours are nearly all glowing, the contrasts are violent, and often shocking to one whose eyes have been artistically educated. The southern Italian does not understand the use of colour, although the heavens and the earth both supply him with the most ample lessons in exquisite harmony and grouping. I noticed one little shop in particular, kept by a counterpart of Quilp the dwarf, who had piled, in most appetising confusion in his windows, saints and contadini, brigands and martyrs, beggars and apostles, fishermen and monks, Bambinos and boatmen—the secular and the religious so inextricably co-mingled as to form a most ludicrous and picturesque whole. Another window certainly contained a thousand of these figures; and the merry workers, seated on benches in the open air, were busy with preparation of others. Buyers at wholesale and retail came and went. Many thousands of these images are sent over sea to the constantly growing Italian colonies in the Argentine Republic, and in other sections of the two Americas. The gaudiness of the Madonnas destined for shops and dwellings is quite indescribable; barbaric is not the word to express it, for barbaric idols are often less gaudy. But there is rarely anything grotesque in the religious figures; the artist is reverent, by instinct, in the treatment of his subject. It is a trifle shocking, however, to hear the workmen engaged on these pious figures interlarding their conversation with the oaths and ejaculations which are so common, and are thought so little of, in Naples. It is recorded of the great Mercadante that he once used an expression of this kind in presence of the Queen of Naples, at a concert given by her command, so unconscious was he that a habit had become second nature. Language is naked and unadorned on the lips of the middle and lower classes in the Neapolitan district;

and the foreigner who proposes to reside in Naples must be prepared to endure this. There is very little real politeness, alas, among these same classes. They are sympathetic to a certain extent; and I think the accusation of treachery brought against them is unfounded. But they are not polite. Even the shopkeepers have no particle of the deference so common in other portions of Italy, and in France and England. Of course, in the higher classes, the best Italian traditions of good breeding are preserved intact.

Around the churches and the theatres flock the poor and the dirty, for it must not be supposed that all the poor are uncleanly. I should think there is more decent and respectable poverty in Naples, than in most cities of seven hundred thousand inhabitants. The number of families who live on the most Lilliputian incomes is astonishing. The wages paid to employés of a very respectable grade are strikingly small. It is not uncommon to see a man with a family earning only five-and-twenty, or thirty, lire per month; yet the numerous family lives, in spite of a taxation which strikes the stranger as ruinous. The family lives, lodging in small compass, because most of its work is done out of doors, even in the crowded sections of the city; and eating in the economical fashion common to the southern Italian. The staple food of a family to which the provider can only bring a franc, or a franc-and-a-half per day, is by no means meat. "Carne" is known to thousands upon thousands of humble Neapolitans only by name, and the chances are that they would not like it if they had it to eat. Fish is consumed in great quantities, particularly the cod-fish, or *bakalau*, prepared in many appetising ways with oil, with vinegar, with vegetables. A huge pot of macaroni, or some other of the hundred and one Italian pastes, or of beans, or of cabbage, or other greens, is prepared every day, and around this the family gathers once a day; the other meals are limited in character and number by the day's chances. The phenomenal ingenuity of the cooks in making something out of nothing is a source of constant surprise to a new-comer. The potato is looked askance at. Wine and oil are cheap and plenty; a quart of pure wine costs seven or eight soldi, and a quart suffices for the temperate requirements of quite a large family. Fruit is of course to

be had for very small sums. An industrious poor family therefore can get enough to eat; but never thinks of meat, or of such substantial repasts as the poorest English occasionally will have.

Hundreds upon hundreds of Neapolitans appear to have no occupation, or to be engaged in some trifling business which can scarcely pay expenses. These people live without getting into debt, but how they do it is a mystery. Then there are the thousands who are far down in the social scale, and who earn nothing, or only a chance penny from time to time. These are all philosophers; they bask in the sun on the pavements with the greatest satisfaction, and are nearly naked and not ashamed. Among them are many who never have worn a shoe or stocking, and whose feet have not been washed for many a season, save by the rain, or a plunge into the harbour. The encrusted dirt is quite fearful to contemplate. The women of this class appear never to take off their clothes, and to have insuperable objections to combing their hair. There is little beauty among these women, and the stamp of ignorance is very perceptible. The serpent trail of the Bourbon dynasty is still visible in many things in this section of emancipated and united Italy.

The universal heaviness of taxation in the Italian peninsula falls with especial force on the small commercial man and the petty cultivator; and it is said that, in Naples and the surrounding districts, the Government sometimes takes as much as sixty per cent. of the receipts. There are all kinds of taxes, which are remorselessly collected by an army of hungry-looking employés, who heap expenses upon the heads of unlucky delinquents. These taxes are the reason why all cabmen, boatmen, guides, cheap pedlars of curiosities, and innkeepers insist upon overcharging foreigners, every one of these classes reasoning that it is clear gain if the foreigner can be made to pay the tax. Every district, and every smallest community near Naples has its little house at the entrance, where the Government collects taxes on articles entering. The peasantry seem to pay cheerfully, because they realise that much of the money is spent in strengthening and improving the national defences, and in securing the nation's dignity. Furthermore, not much criticism of taxation, or any other governmental action, is permitted.

Everywhere is heard lamentation because

of the lack of capital, and the newspapers are filled with advertisements offering from fifteen to twenty per cent. for money. "An honest young commercial man" makes a stirring appeal for fifteen thousand lire to put into his business, announcing that he is willing to pay twenty per cent. per annum for it, and to repay within five years. It would be interesting, if possible, to follow his case, should he obtain the money, and to learn where this manner of doing business would land the honest young commercial man.

In Naples, a handsome business structure is a "palazzo;" a broad, principal thoroughfare is a "corso;" and every mushroom company is an "Institute," or a "Banca." The natural grandiloquence of the language easily aids the new eagerness for ostentation and glitter. But there is much solid progress. New quarters have sprung up, as by magic, along the hill-sides, bordering the charming sweep of the semi-circular "Chiaja;" and the well-paved streets are thronged with private and public conveyances, and with respectably-drilled regiments of troops passing to and from their barracks.

In Naples the open carriage is considered a prime necessity by many thousands of people. A Neapolitan will go without his breakfast in order to appear dashing along the Via Roma or the Chiaja in a "carrozzella." The peasants, the washerwomen, the porters, the coalheavers, all take cabs; and the stranger who does not, is audibly cursed by the fraternity of Jehus. The great Baedeker, purveyor of guide-books to the public, records with honest German "*naiveté*," that Italians occasionally say to him: "Lici è Signore, e va á piedi?" How, indeed, should a Signore, a real gentleman, walk! Towards evening, in the autumn and winter months, there is a grand procession of carriages along the Chiaja, near the gardens, and thence up the steep and rather narrow streets leading to the hill quarters; and, in point of numbers, the display is at times almost equal to that in the Avenue du Bois de Boulogne in winter.

The "Via Roma," as the historic "Toledo" is now called, is chiefly remarkable for the animation which pervades it all day and far into the night. The "carrozzellas" fly through it as if the drivers had a wager that their clients should not have time to look into the shop windows; ten thousand bawling and screaming pedlars hustle the rich and the poor passers, thrusting jour-

nals, matches, knives, clothing, cooking utensils, articles of food into their very faces, and relinquishing their efforts to sell only when driven away.

The patient and friendly ass whisks his philosophic tail at every corner, or places his little grey foot on your varnished boot, or thrusts his black muzz'e under your arm in his endeavours to get across the way with his load. Down the paved slopes rattles a wagon laden with empty wine casks, and furiously drawn by a triple team composed of a white bullock, a lame mule, and a scrubby and dispirited horse, prancing and snorting, and threatening annihilation to anything which comes in their way. Here a bare-footed friar, in a yellow gown, stops to have his hand kissed by an elderly gentleman in black; there a contadina, in yellow and red finery, descends with dignity from a country chariot. Soldiers innumerable; and officers in short grey cloaks, long grey cloaks, African helmets, and black and gold; enliven the scene.

The sun pours floods of light upon the tall yellow houses, and illuminates the most labyrinthine recesses of the side streets with their variegated population of toiling thousands. The omnipresent children yell incessantly; the asses bray; and couples, discussing trivial matters, gesticulate to that extent that it seems as if their hands would fly off at their supple wrists.

Men, whose fierce countenances and excited demeanour might indicate that they are plotting murder, are really discussing some trivial occurrence in the neighbourhood; and the brawny women, shaking their fists in each others' faces, are merely affirming their respective opinions as to the merits of a recently purchased cabbage.

The Neapolitan regards as vivacity and natural warmth of expression that which would seem to us very much like dangerous violence.

TO-MORROW.

"YOU'LL come to-morrow, then?" the light words lightly said, And gaily she waved her little hand, gaily he bared his head.

"You'll come to-morrow, then?" and the man on his business went, With a tender prayer in heart and lip, yet on his work intent.

The woman a moment lingered, "he might turn for a parting look," Then with half a sigh and half a smile, her household burthen took.

" You'll come to-morrow, then?" and ere that morning broke, Pale lips, in the crowded city, of the " railway accident" spoke.

A strong man in a stranger's house, in Death's dread keeping lay; A woman wept her full heart out in a cottage a mile away.

So lightly our thoughts run onward, so lightly we hope and plan, While Fate sits grimly by, and smiles, to watch his plaything, man

Discounting the dim, vague future, while his blind eyes cannot see What a single flying hour may bring; where the next dark step may be.

And Love floats laughing onward, and by his side glides sorrow; And men and women between them walk and say, "We'll meet to-morrow!"

BILLIARDS.

THERE are few more cheerful sights, when the evenings are long, and the weather dull, than a handsome, well-lighted billiard-room, with the smooth, green surface of the table; the ivory balls flying noiselessly here and there, or clicking musically together. The sense of comfort and " *sans gêne* " makes the billiard-room one of the pleasantest resorts of a country house, and the most alluring retreat for those who take their ease at a country inn. And the game itself has the advantage of being interesting and exciting enough as a trial of skill, without any particular stake on the result being necessary; and it is as much enjoyed by the tyro—that is, if he plays with another tyro—as by the skilled performer; by the urchin, who can just see over the table, as by the veteran, who can hardly manage to hobble round the board. It is a game, too, which rests the brain, or leaves it free to work as it pleases; and if the game does not exactly favour thought, it does not exclude it. A certain amount of bodily exercise, too, is involved in the progress of a game of billiards.

Of course, it is possible to be too fond of the game, to the waste of time and money, and with nothing to show for it all. But what good things are there which may not be thus abused? And the dangers of billiards attach chiefly to public rooms of a certain class, or to the rooms of clubs, where gambling is a specialty. Against domestic billiards there is nothing to be said. Indeed, an American authority declares that, " the billiard-table has become a requisite in every well-furnished

household; and to play a fine game is regarded as one of the accomplishments of every well-educated gentleman."

But if all our homes, even if indifferently well-furnished, are not provided with billiard-tables, and if there exist many otherwise fairly-educated gentlemen who are but indifferent performers with the cue, yet there are evidences everywhere of the spreading popularity of the game. You hear the rattle of the balls in the policemen's quarters, and in the soldiers' recreation-rooms. Workmen play billiards at their clubs; and popular institutes find increased popularity in providing billiard-tables for their members. And with the general diffusion of the game, the skill of its professional players seems also to have greatly increased. Scores are now made which, some years ago, would have been deemed impossible, and large assemblages of spectators are drawn together to witness the performances of the great masters of the game.

It is not an affair of yesterday, this game of billiards, and it has its ancient history, although the precise origin of the game is not easily to be determined. All that can be said about the matter is, that the game was certainly known in the sixteenth century, but that it cannot be so certainly traced to any earlier period. The first manual on the subject—and that but a meagre one—is furnished by William Cotton, the friend of gentle Izaak Walton, who assisted the latter in the " *Compleat Angler*." On his own account, Cotton published, in 1674, the " *Compleat Gamester*," which, dealing chiefly with cards and dice, contains a section on billiards. Cotton boldly attributes the game to Italy. It may be that the " *Gamester* " is right, for, during the previous two centuries, Italy had been the home and origin of all the gentler arts of life. But evidence is wanting; for, in Cotton's time, billiards had been known in England for at least a century. " Few towns of note," saith the " *Compleat Gamester* "—a gamester super-grammaticam—" which hath not a publick table; nor are they wanting in many noble and private families."

Indeed, from the beginning, billiards was accounted a lordly, and even Royal, game. In the mouth of the Queen of Egypt, the Imperial Cleopatra, Shakespeare places his solitary allusion to the game:

Let it alone : let us to Billiards.
Come Charmian!

Against this, indeed, may be set the equally familiar verse of Edmund Spenser:

With all the thrifless games that may be found,
With mumming and with masking all around,
With dice, with cards, with balliards far unfit,
With shuttlecocks, misseeming manly wit.

The original spelling seems to have been balyards, and one cannot feel sure about the balyards. It might mean something else—ball-yards, tennis courts, or something of that kind. First of all it is hardly likely that a poet would make a thick word out of a thin one, and again in Spenser's time the game seems to have been considered as a dignified, courtly kind of affair, hardly likely to be classed by a courtly poet among common games of chance, or skill. Was not Mary, the Scotch Cleopatra, a lover of billiards; a game which solaced her weary captivity in England?

Another illustration may be given of the high estate of billiards in those good old times. And this is taken from a Royal inventory of the reign of Edward the Sixth, relating to the furniture contained in the King's house at the Moor, near Rickmansworth—ancient plenishing, tarnished cloth of gold, faded arras, tattered hangings; the paraphernalia of regular semi-Royal State. The house, before it was the King's, had belonged to Cardinal Wolsey, who had, in happier times, entertained his Royal master, Harry, "at his poor house of the More." Well, upon this list of chattels there appears this important item: "One billet bourde covered with green cloth." Now the King had seized all the Cardinal's furniture as well as his house, and it is not an improbable surmise that the board was originally Wolsey's, and that King and Cardinal might have played a friendly match upon that very "billet bourde," while some noble Duke kept the score.

And this item in the old inventory may throw a little light upon the origin of the name billiards. In its present form it is probably derived from the French. But Littré seems to show that the billard was originally the club, or stick, with which the game was played; a meaning which the English billet—the hard billet of wood, not the billet doux—would faithfully render. But whatever the name of the instrument, the thing itself was not like the latter-day billiard cue. In the seventeenth century, the billiard was a curved piece of heavy wood; the striking part of which was faced with horn, or ivory, or mother-of-pearl. It was held loosely in

the hand as one holds a pen, and the ball was struck as with a club after the fashion of hockey, or the more courtly "pall mall." The table was of much the same shape as at present, and there were "holes called hazards with nets" as in the modern tables, but at first at one end only of the board; one in each corner and one in the middle. An ivory arch, called the port, was placed at one end of the table, and at the other a small ivory column, like a chess king, and called by the same high title. The game as described by Cotton was played with two ivory balls, for already the billiard ball was an emblem of smoothness, as Ben Jonson writes:

Even nose and cheek withal,
Smooth as is the billiard ball.

With ball in hand the player takes his stroke, and "to win you must pass the port and touch the king," but without flooring His Majesty. "To hinder your adversary you hazard him," or put him in the hole, when he has to begin again. While, if you hole yourself, or are hazarded by your adversary, you receive the same penalty. Hence the terms winning and losing hazard.

John Evelyn, in his diary, mentions a foreign table which he saw at the Dutch Ambassador's with "more hazards than ours," probably with the six pockets which are the complement of the modern table. And the game thereon was played without port or king, and the balls struck with the end of the stick.

It was long before the conservative English dispensed with the port and king, foolish adjuncts of the game, which crop up now and then in later times in the form of skittle-pool, or some such inanity. And when an alteration was made it was due to French influence.

In France the game had long been in favour. King Louis the Fourteenth was a great lover of billiards; and his magnificent nobles, in their grand perukes, his Marshals and Generals, matched their skill against their Royal master's, about some elaborately inlaid billiard-table in the Royal saloons of Versailles. One Chamillard is recorded to have gained a high office of state from his skill at billiards, which the King delighted to witness. This was the same Chamillard

Qui fut un héros au Billard
Et un zéro au ministère.

When the French game was introduced into England, what time the Regency in France brought something like peace and

goodwill between the two nations, it soon superseded the old-fashioned game. It was played, according to contemporary accounts, "only with masts and balls," the mast being the *masse*, or mace, an instrument still to be met with in billiard-rooms. With the mace the ball is pushed and not struck; and English players adhered to the mace long after it had been superseded on the Continent by the cue. And the mace was considered the lady's weapon even up to recent times.

The French game was played with two white balls, and the play consisted in hazarding your adversary's ball, and keeping out of the pocket yourself, just as single pool is played nowadays. But before the end of the century a third ball was introduced, the red ball, which bore the mysterious name of "carambole." And now to hit the two balls successively became one of the points of play, and the caram, or cannon, added a fresh interest to the game. With this came into existence the English game, "par excellence," at which all hazards count to the striker, except that unfortunate one known as a *coup*, where his ball flies into a pocket without having touched another on its passage.

Towards the end of last century the cue came into favour among the most knowing players. But as yet it was a very imperfect instrument. It had no "tip" except its own wooden end; and any one who has been condemned to play with a cue without a "tip" may judge how little execution can be done with such a weapon. Chalk was sometimes used as now, to give the cue a hold upon the ball; or, as some players advised, the end of the cue was roughened with a file. If one wanted to strike his ball high, so as to "follow;" or low, that it might stop dead when it struck the other; he might use a cue cut obliquely for the purpose, which was called a *Jeffrey*, from the name of its inventor.

Early in the nineteenth century came an invention which gave a new life to the game. A French player named Mingaud discovered the advantage of leather tips to cues. Had he lived in the present day he would have no doubt patented his invention all over the world, and realised an immense fortune. As it was, he gave his secret to the world without any particular recompense.

Billiards could now be played with much greater skill and nicety than before; yet still the bed of the table was of wood, and hardly

ever to be obtained perfectly level, and the cushions were stuffed with list, from which the balls rebounded but sluggishly. There are, perhaps, a few of these old wooden tables still in existence; and twenty or thirty years ago many an old specimen might be found scattered here and there in remote country districts. Perhaps it was to be found in the corner of some windy old assembly-room, where the belles and beaux of other days had merrily footed the creaking floor, a racketty old table, the holes in its cloth repaired with patches of oil-cloth. Or it might occupy the lion's share of the club-room, where the tradesmen of the little town met nightly over pipes and gin-and-water.

In the latter case, there was sure to be some old practitioner in the neighbourhood—the barber, perhaps, or the parish clerk and shoemaker—who might be called in to play a game with the wandering stranger. You might be a brilliant performer under other circumstances, and know every point of the game; but the old stager knew all the weaknesses of the table, the pockets that drew, and the up-hills and down-hills of the course, the bias of the cracked ball, and the influence of the chip that some jolly swaggerer of old had knocked out of the "red." And then he was used to the cues, with tips the size of a muffin. So that he chuckled mightily over your discomfiture, as he refreshed himself at the expense of the foreign champion.

About such tables gathered our great grandfathers, with their cocked-hats, pig-tails, and hessians, wagering this or that on their skill—generally something to eat or drink. Yet there were fine players among them even then, and especially at such places of resort as Bath or Brighton. The proprietor of a billiard-room at the former place is said to have made the discovery of the "side-stroke," that is to say, by striking his ball at the side instead of in the line of its central axis, he succeeded in giving it a twist, or spinning motion, in addition to its forward impetus. And this "side" he found might be made to modify, to almost any extent, the angle at which the ball rebounded from the cushion or from another ball. Other people, doubtless, had practised the stroke, but had kept it to themselves. The man of Bath imparted the secret to his marker, one Carr, who was a fine player, and developed the new stroke, travelling about the country exhibiting his skill to the amateurs of the

period. It is said that he attributed, at first, the efficacy of his stroke to the peculiar kind of chalk he used; and that he sold boxes of twisting chalk—to a good profit, doubtless, among those desirous of emulating his skill.

The side-stroke was still something of a novelty when the use of slate beds for billiard-tables became common. The first examples were made about the year 1827, and, in 1835, india-rubber cushions were introduced, which quickened the play and made the game more lively. The advantages of slate were so great, in the way of providing a smooth and even surface, that wooden tables were in time superseded.

"Gom viz me to London, and dry a slate table," says the Baron von Punter to Mr. Cox, of the "Diary."

And the game, it will be remembered by students of Thackeray, came off at Mr. Abednego's rooms, in the Quadrant, with unpleasant results for Mr. Cox.

This was in the year 1839, or thereabouts, when a player, known as Jonathan of Brighton, was the champion of the cue. "Jonathan, who knows his play, can only give Cox two in a game of a hundred," appears in notices to correspondents, as quoted by Mr. Cox, from the "Flareup," weekly sporting journal. He was an excellent, careful player, this Jonathan, and wrote a very good treatise on the game, under his real name of Edwin Kentfield. He was acknowledged as champion till 1849, when he had to lower his cue before the all-conquering John Roberts.

Kentfield's best break was a score of one hundred and ninety-six, while Roberts's record reached three hundred and forty-six; but this included one hundred and four spots, and would not be now looked upon as an extraordinary performance. Indeed, the son and successor of Roberts, John the younger, scored the other day, in a spot-barred match with Cook, the grand total of six hundred and ninety, a feat not likely to be surpassed by any one else just yet at all round play. The champion of the spot-stroke has scored breaks of over two thousand, nearly all completed by that famous stroke.

A word about the spot-stroke may here be interposed. For those who have not studied the game it may be explained that the spot is a black mark like a wafer, at a distance of eighteen inches from the top cushion, upon which the red ball is placed at the beginning of the game, and

whenever it has been holed thereafter. Hence it can be "hazarded" into either of the top corner pockets by a ball in position on either side of the spot. To attain this position and stop there, crossing from one side to the other, as the red ball is continually holed, is the aim and object in life to the spot-stroke player. Yet it requires an almost miraculous accuracy of eye, and delicacy of touch to perform this stroke, near four hundred times running, as Peall has done before now. It is magnificent, but it is not billiards. What becomes of the game with its interest, its life, and movement, if all the play is confined to a series of almost identical strokes?

The Americans boast that with them the spot-stroke is impossible. And, indeed, the American game has taken a somewhat different development to ours. The so-called American game is played with two red balls, and for winning hazards only, and cannons which may be single, or double, as two or three balls are "caramboled." But this game has been, since 1873, superseded by a three-ball game differing from the English game in many points which there is not here space to elucidate. The Americans legislate against long runs and overpowering breaks, and gain their object by ingeniously extending the area and disabilities of the baulk. The Americans, no doubt, got their original impulse in billiards from the old French game. But since the Revolution, billiards in France have also been revolutionised. The cannon game is now almost exclusively played in France, and hazards and pockets altogether discarded. But the game excites no such general interest in France as with us.

TIPPING.

THERE is an old-fashioned street in an extremely sober and sleepy town of Stafford which rejoices in the name of Tipping. It is not very far from that "Swan Inn" which was immortalised by Dickens, on a certain rainy, dreary day, under the title of "The Dodo."

The name of Tipping is suggestive. Whether the gentleman, who once was the proud owner of it, ever expected that it would one day pass, if not into classical, at least into popular English, is not told us. But the term "tipping" is supposed to have been derived from this same street, which probably gained its title from some obscure and modest-minded person, who

little thought of the halo of popularity which was to grow round his name when he was forgotten.

The cause of its adaptation to one of the most important systems in our daily existence is not perhaps exactly creditable to the ethics of Tipping Street. In the days when the world had not become as moral as it is to-day, or, probably, had not learned so well the art of not being found out, the inhabitants of Stafford and its surrounding localities used to assemble during the elections, in Tipping Street, and there, with the guilelessness of cheerful innocence, sell their votes to any one of the contending gentlemen who happened to make it most worth their while. There was an Arcadian simplicity about this which should be respected.

A small and ragged Sunday-school boy, whose reasoning powers were in advance of his years, when asked one day to contribute a penny to a foreign mission, sat thoughtful for a few seconds, and then declined to share that penny with unknown little blacks in the centre of Africa, expressing his opinion that it was no kindness to teach them different things; for if they were taught, and then did wrong, it would be bad for them, whereas, now, as they knew no better, nobody expected anything from them. The School Board and the moral training of his Sunday School weighed hard on himself, and he spoke feelingly.

Perhaps, if those irresponsible voters, who thronged Tipping Street before the political world had become so extremely critical, had lived in these days of complicated ethics, they might have felt a little like that small, ragged boy. Bribery and corruption are unpleasant epithets to be hurled at your head when you only want to live in peace and quietness with your neighbours, especially those more fortunately placed in social position than yourself.

And if you are of a simple frame of mind, with no taste for subtle reasoning, you find yourself unable to see the difference between selling your vote in the public thoroughfare of Tipping Street, for a five-pound note, and giving it to the husband of some great lady, who lays her beautiful, delicate hand in yours, and, smiling ravishingly up into your bewildered eyes, promises that you shall have that new chimney put to your roof. The chimney, or the smile, or the dainty touch, or perhaps all combined, prove

as irresistible a tip as the five-pound note.

There are two sides to the question of tipping, as there are mostly two sides to every condition existing on this planet. Some people look at it from one aspect, others from the second. The tipper and the tipped take their place on a totally different standpoint, and their vision is naturally varied. The tipper may even feel a keen desire to apply the toe of his boot to the person of the individual he is tipping, but he must suppress his feelings and hand him the sovereign or ten shillings as the case may be, in obedience to the law of social life, which compels us to offer up this sacrifice to appearances. Our friend's butler may have handed our last new hat to another visitor, who, we may have strong reason to believe, will never relinquish the prize, and presents us, with solemn deference, with the old one left in its place; and we must hide our emotion and tip him, as if we were truly glad to receive our own again. The ill-concealed insolence of the smart-livered footman as he helps us on with the shabby overcoat, which has seen more winters than it should have done pass over our respected head, has to be rewarded in a similar fashion. The friend's gamekeeper who has uttered with a grin in an audible whisper to the man next you, who has just brought down the bird you missed, that it would be safer for him to stand in front of you, looks out at the end of the day for the sovereign with which you smilingly present him, wishing all the time you could at least make a hole with it through him instead. You feel in your heart, that, for once that day, you might distinguish yourself as he stands there, civil and solemn, but with the consciousness of all your wasted shots beaming in his eye.

The schoolboy who has frightened his maiden aunt into fits by his daring escapades in her trees, or on her roof; who has driven you nearly wild by his joyous and sublimely indifferent disregard of all your cut and dried rules of life, expects a parting tip, as if you were both broken-hearted at the withdrawal of his peace-destroying presence. You give it, knowing that it will be hastily laid out, to the waste of your hardly-earned coin, and to the danger of his constitution, and that probably all the glory you will gain in the one-sided transaction will consist of the patronisingly affectionate exclamation uttered to the

other young vandals aiding in the consumption of the tarts you could not help buying: "He's not a bad old trout, as uncles go." The maiden aunt, in her turn, has also sacrificed under the law of tipping by cramming, with noble fortitude, a hamper full of deleterious luxuries, overlooking the sad fact that her cockatoo has an addition—the reverse of complimentary to her fellow-creatures—to its vocabulary; and that her poodle has not yet recovered from the severe act of shaving it underwent privately one morning, causing her dismay and grief unspeakable. But if we suffer, we suffer in good company.

Poor royalty laments over the costly system of present-giving, which its exalted position necessitates, when it pays visits, and often wisely decides to stay at home if the family exchequer happens to be rather emptier than usual.

The very conditions of our social life are interwoven with this web of tipping. For tipping itself takes many forms. It is not always in the shape of hard cash. Perhaps, after all, that is the easiest tribute to pay, and one, too, which, measured after the standard that makes a man's self of more importance than his pocket, involves the least loss to himself. There is the tipping that turns the tipped into a kind of moral doormat, upon which any man of rank and influence may wipe his shoes. The fawning servility, the fulsome adulation, the pandering to petty desires and ignoble passions, are all so many tips paid to Fortune, who appears for the time in the guise of powerful statesman, or influential noble, or wealthy merchant. Perhaps it is but fair to say, that this moral tipping may seem on occasions to be unconscious.

For instance, when, being of an artistic temperament, you admire, with great fervour, the decidedly reddish locks of your chief's favourite daughter, seeing in them the burnished gold in which the painters of old delighted, you may, or may not, know that you are tipping the man in whose hands your future prosperity rests. It is lucky for you that you have artistic tastes, that is all. And when promotion comes, you would be highly indignant at being told that it had reached you through anything but your own merits. It is just as well; and, as tipping and being tipped will probably endure until there is another universal deluge, we had better make the best of it, and try, with worldly wisdom, to get as many tips as we give.

"A LITTLE BIT OF TENNYSON." A STORY IN TWO CHAPTERS.

CHAPTER I.

"CAN you tell me, please, whether this is the road to Stretchford?"

It was a mild November morning, sunless, but with sufficient light to make any bit of vivid colour stand out in sharp relief against the surrounding grays and browns. The scene was an English country lane, muddy and narrow, with no house or other sign of human occupation in sight. The place was altogether so deserted that Maurice Carrington, riding to a distant meet through byways with which he was imperfectly acquainted, felt the sudden apparition of a tall, slim girl—coming through a wicket-gate communicating with a field-path into the lane—quite a godsend.

He checked his horse as he spoke, and bent forward with easy grace to hear what she had got to say. He saw that she was not a lady; but he was a gentleman, and to be otherwise than courteous to any woman, gentle or simple, was not in his nature.

She hesitated so long, before answering, that he repeated his question. He little guessed the irreparable mischief that was done, as there broke suddenly upon the startled vision of a simple country maiden the radiant apparition which was never hereafter to leave her haunted senses day or night. He was the beau ideal of a young Englishman of degree, as he sat his noble hunter, his scarlet coat throwing into bold relief the handsome face Bessie Peters had ever seen, or was ever likely to see. She looked, and looked, and looked again; simply spell-bound beneath the frank gaze of the grey eyes fixed upon her.

"Seventeen though she was, she answered "Yes, sir," as timidly as a little child.

"Oh, then that's all right!" he returned, visibly relieved. "I was afraid I had taken the wrong turning at the cross-roads. So I keep straight on!"

"Yes, sir."

"And how far is it?"

"Three miles, sir."

"Three miles? Thank you. Good morning!"

And lifting his hat slightly, with a half-smile which revealed beneath the faint moustache of early manhood such treasures, in the way of white and even teeth, as had never before dawned upon Bessie's

startled comprehension—good teeth in remote rural districts being the exception rather than the rule—he set off again down the lane, his mind full of his own affairs, and with no thought or remembrance of the girl whose heart was destined to ache for him for many a weary day. Whilst he was talking to her, his quick eyes had taken in every detail of a slender, unformed figure, dowdily dressed in unbecoming garments not smart enough for a servant, but certainly not those of a lady. Her features were also unformed; and so small and childish that, although she had rather nice brown eyes, it was assuredly not a face, the mere recollection of which would make the heart of handsome Maurice Carrington, the wealthy young Squire of Grenby, beat faster in all time to come.

She, poor soul, sank down on a big stone by the roadside, and sat there in a dream—such a dream as is only possible at seventeen. She was not more susceptible than the average of girls. She had been strictly brought up, and was of a degree in the social scale above that of the vulgar type of young woman, which cannot exchange speech with a gentleman without imagining that he is falling in love with her. Yet she sat in a maze, a hopeless captive to as mad an infatuation as ever girl experienced to her sorrow.

Again and again she conjured up before her the high-bred face with its entrancing smile; again and again she recalled the perfect grace of the unknown young horseman as he bent down to speak to her.

"Shall I ever see him again?" she asked herself, as, at last, she picked up the basket she had been carrying, and pursued her prosaic way; not without a feeling of strange rapture at the consciousness of living in the same world that he lived in; of being, in however infinitesimal a degree, the fellow-creature of so bright a mortal.

Yet, from the very first, she knew her infatuation to be hopeless. Young as she was, she could not deceive herself on that point. She knew it was impossible that a finished gentleman—as even her inexperienced eyes at once perceived that this young man must be—would ever bestow a second glance upon little Bessie Peters, the miller's niece. She had been educated at a cheap school; she was accustomed to associate with common people; she was dowdy, and awkward, and ill-dressed—she had read all her demerits with fatal ac-

curacy in the magic mirror of those fine grey eyes.

"Oh, if I had only been different!" she sighed, as she trudged along in the mire, in the boots which were not like the sixtieth cousins of those varnished ones which fell into such admirable curves on Maurice Carrington's shapely feet. "If I had only been beautiful—and rich—and a lady—perhaps—perhaps—!"

Ah me!

Graybourne Mill was too prosperous and utilitarian to be picturesque, being the property of a hard-headed old rustic whose sole idea was, to make money. Bessie's uncle and guardian, John Peters, was a leading man in the little village, and, in the eyes of the neighbours, her lot was a very fortunate one for a penniless orphan girl. The miller was a widower, and it was well known that Bessie would, in due time, inherit his property, if she only conducted herself so as to please him. The bucolics were well-advised in putting in this cautious clause, for they had had before their eyes a terrible example in the shape of Bessie's cousin Mary, the miller's only daughter, who, a few years back, had insisted on marrying a strolling actor, rather than endure the awful monotony of village life any longer. An actor! The good people shuddered with horror at the idea of any respectable girl marrying such a degraded being; and not even the reports which reached the village occasionally, to the effect that she was both happy and prosperous in her new career, could prevent them from looking down upon her as a person who had gone utterly to the bad. John Peters cursed his runaway daughter with all the fervour of a narrow mind; and the acerbity of temper, which rendered him more feared than beloved in Graybourne, was charitably attributed to "the dreadful troubles he had had, poor man!"

Nevertheless, he looked a stolid, unromantic Briton enough, as Bessie took her place, two hours later, at the dinner-table in the mill kitchen. She was all overflowing with a secret, shy, exquisite delight; which, for once, rendered her oblivious of the unpolished manner in which her uncle ate and drank, and dipped into the salt-cellars whatever article of cutlery came first. Bessie's parents had been residents of a great town; she herself had seen enough of manners at school to know that the people of Graybourne were utter Goths; and there was in addition a

substratum of natural refinement in the girl which made the red-tiled kitchen, the coarse table-appointments, and her uncle's rough ways very repellent to her. To-day, too, there was an additional aggravation in the presence of a young farmer, Martin Bowman, a neighbour of theirs, who was Bessie's special detestation. Round-faced, fair and foolish, he grinned incessantly at everything that went on; and, while he and the miller monotonously discoursed of turnips, after the manner of rustics, her thoughts floated away in a dream. She pictured her unknown hero sitting down to table amid the glitter of plate and glass, the scents of hothouse flowers, and the soft tread of liveried domestics; and, poor little girl! her heart ached as it had never ached in her short life before.

She was recalled to a sense of present surroundings by an observation of Martin's, who remarked: "T' young Squoires coom home," with his mouth full. Bessie lifted her eyes with a sudden flash of intelligence, for it struck her that her fairy prince might very well be young Carrington of Grenby, the next village, in which was Martin's home. She had lived long enough at Graybourne to know all the gentry for miles round perfectly by sight; and she listened eagerly for what was to follow.

"What? Young Carrington?" asked John Peters.

"Yes, he's been abroad, completing his eddication! My! Won't he have a mint of money of his own! Good-looking chap too. I met him this mornin', turnin' out o' the Hall gate in pink, goin' to the meet at Stretchford no doubt, for he was mounted on as pretty a bit of horseflesh as I've seen this side Christmas—a bay with black legs." That settled the identity of the young stranger, for Bessie at once recognised this description of his horse. "They say madam's so pleased to have her son home again that she's goin' to give a big ball and supper to all the tenants. If she does, will you promise to give me a dance, Bessie?"

"She is not likely to invite me," said the girl coldly.

"Bless you, mother and the girls will be sure to be asked, and what's easier than for you to go wi' us? In a white frock, wi' a red rose in your hair, you'd look real pretty, Bessie," urged the kindhearted young farmer, who was not without a sneaking admiration for this girl, whose subdued tints were in such strong contrast to most of the village belles.

"There are no red roses now," she said, seriously.

"They can be had for money," hinted Martin, significantly; and then John Peters effectually changed the conversation by asking his guest if he had got a good price for the white heifer he sold on Saturday.

When the things had been cleared away by the old woman who attended to the heavier domestic duties of the mill—thereby enabling Bessie to enjoy what the villagers were wont to describe as "a lady's life"—the two men sat down by the fire to smoke their pipes. Bessie sat for a few minutes, pondering over the entrancing figure which had been dancing before her eyes all day; then rose and hastily donned her dowdy brown hat, saying she was going to see Miss Bertha.

Her uncle offered no opposition, and in a short time the girl had traversed the whole length of the village, and was knocking at the side door of the ivy-covered Rectory—the one aristocratic abode into which she was privileged to enter. It was a mere form to ask the parlour-maid if Miss Bertha were at home, for the Rector's daughter never went out. An incurable spinal complaint kept her a close prisoner to her room; and, as her father was a wealthy man, every luxury was lavished upon his only daughter. It had pleased Bertha Haskett to take rather a fancy to the pale-faced girl in whom her trained eye perceived the germs of better things, and, in a patronising way, she encouraged her to come to the Rectory, and took some pains to cultivate in her a taste for good literature and occupations of a higher stamp than those which satisfied the other village girls. It was, perhaps, a doubtful kindness to make the girl more dissatisfied with her lot than she was already; but it was Bertha's whim, and no one dared to say her nay.

The invalid was an intellectual-looking girl of twenty-five, whose keen blue eyes had the haggard look of suffering. Her little room was decked with every charming adornment imaginable, and, as she contrasted it with the mill kitchen, its aspect caused Bessie to heave a deep sigh of relief.

"Well, child," began Miss Haskett, kindly enough. "I'm glad to see you. I was wishing some one would come in and enliven my solitude, for father has gone to Wellborough. Take off your hat and sit down and make yourself comfortable."

Bessie blushingly complied, although it was quite out of her power to enjoy the

last injunction. She was never at ease in Miss Haskett's company, for she felt the social gulf between them too deeply; and yet she was happier in Bertha's little sitting-room than in the mill kitchen, though nobody at home noticed whether she was sitting awkwardly, or if her hair was not neat.

They chatted for a little on village topics, Bessie's demure "Yes, Miss Bertha," and "No, Miss Bertha," scarcely breaking the ripple of the elder girl's monologue. Then Miss Haskett, pointing to a book-case, said :

"Get out the 'French Revolution,' and read me a chapter, Bessie."

Her ill-health prevented her from reading much for herself, as the weakness of her spine also affected her eyes, and Bessie had long been accustomed to act as reader. She obediently found the volume, and began. But to-day the tangle of hard words and involved meanings seemed harder than usual, for in her mind's eye she saw nothing but a handsome, boyish face, swimming in a magic haze of scarlet and white. Presently Bertha checked her with her hand.

"You are evidently not in the humour for Carlyle to-day, Bessie. You read that last page atrociously. Try some poetry instead. There's Tennyson there."

Again Bessie obediently complied, and, being bidden, read "The Lotos-Eaters," and "Mariana," fairly well. And then Miss Haskett said :

"Now give me a little bit of 'In Memoriam,' as a tonic to finish up with."

The girl turned to the poem rather reluctantly, for until then that sublime requiem had been miles above her comprehension. The simpler sentiments and more commonplace phrases of "Lady Clara Vere de Vere," and "The May Queen," were better suited to her undeveloped mind.

"Where shall I begin, Miss Bertha?"

"Oh, anywhere," said the invalid, with closed eyes. "I know it all by heart, and it is all beautiful—and true."

Anxious to get her task over, Bessie began where her eye chanced to rest first :

"He passed; a soul of nobler tone :
My spirit loved and loves him yet,
Like some poor girl whose heart is set
On one whose rank exceeds her own.

He mixing with his proper sphere,
She finds the baseness of her lot,
Half jealous of she knows not what,
And envying all that meet him there.

The little village looks forlorn;
She sighs amid her narrow days,
Moving about the household ways,
In that dark house where she was born.

The foolish neighbours come and go,
And tease her till the day draws by;
At night she weeps 'How vain am I!
How should he love a thing so low?'

Her voice faltered at the end, and she sat silent, filled with thoughts too deep for words. She had turned to the poem as a mere task, and lo! the master-mind had presented to her, as in a mirror, the living image of herself. Word for word, line for line, it was all true; just what her life must be from henceforward, as though revealed to her by an inspired prophet. The ache and the longing, the weariness and discontent, the hopelessness and self-torture; there they all were, focussed in the brief compass of half-a-page.

"Bessie," said Miss Haskett, looking curiously at her thoughtful face, "are you aware that you read that little bit exquisitely? I doubt if the finest actress alive could have put more expression into the words than you did. There, shut the book; we won't have any more to spoil the effect of that. What's the matter, child? Do you know, when you look like that, with your cheeks flushed and your eyes sparkling, you—really—are," with a critical side-movement of the head, "quite pretty?"

The girl impulsively flung herself on her knees beside the couch and seized Miss Haskett's hand. "Oh, Miss Bertha, do you really mean it? Do you think I shall ever be really, truly pretty?"

"You silly child," rebuked the Rector's daughter. "What does it matter whether you are pretty or not? Handsome is that handsome does. But if you are really curious to know," she added, relenting a little at the sight of Bessie's abashed face, "I may say that when you were reading that bit of Tennyson you were pretty; though, why you were so then, and are not now, is more than I can explain. Now ring the bell, and you shall give me my tea."

Thus coldly relegated to the domain of common-sense, Bessie collected herself, and endeavoured to forget her new-born hope of one day being fair enough to please his eyes, in the occupation of preparing Miss Haskett's cup of afternoon tea.

The following day she trudged into the market town to buy a cheap copy of "In Memoriam;" and again and again she pored over the wonderful lines until she

knew them by heart. She made an excuse on Sunday morning to go over to Grenby Church instead of attending their own at Graybourne ; and, concealed behind a pillar, watched Maurice Carrington as he brought up the rear of a file of well-dressed people who entered the great Hall-pew. In his sober Sunday coat he was not the radiant vision he had been in the lane ; but his features, if anything, looked handsomer in the subdued light of the painted windows than they had done in the full glare of day ; and whatever little hope there was left for Bessie's peace of mind was gone from that hour. She sat in silent adoration, feasting her eyes upon his face until the blessing was pronounced, and the people streamed out into the churchyard.

The poor moth fluttered round the candle until existence became a burden. She haunted the neighbourhood of Grenby, heedless of weather and personal discomfort ; more than rewarded if, hidden behind some tree, or screened by an angle in a wall, she could catch a glimpse of her hero, afoot with his dogs or his gun, or driving his dog-cart or mail-phæton.

The neighbours wondered "what was come to the lass," for she was silent and abstracted in company. The mere sight of the Hall chimneys, peeping through the trees, would make her foolish heart beat quicker. She would steal into the park, and, securely hidden from observation, scan the house with its stone portico and long lines of windows, wondering which were his rooms, and whether the colony of rooks in the elms awoke him by their cawing in the morning.

She spent much time, also, with Bertha Haskett, who seemed, in a far-off way, a kind of link between her and Maurice ; for the Hasketts and the Carringtons were on terms of intimacy. Bessie also eagerly seized every opportunity of getting Miss Haskett to correct her country pronunciation, and to give her hints on etiquette and the usages of society. Bertha laughed at her eagerness to improve herself, but consented to assist her with some really valuable advice ; and Bessie felt that every day she was improving both in mind and manners, and, thanks to the care she now took to cherish her complexion and her other personal advantages, in looks also.

Returning from the Rectory in the dusk of one January afternoon, she found visitors in the mill kitchen—Martin Bowman, and his stout, voluble, good-natured mother.

"Bessie, lass," began the young farmer, in his lumbering way, "I've brought you such good news that you ought to give a chap a kiss."

"Go away, Martin !" she cried, in great indignation, eluding the laughing attempt he made to seize her in his arms.

"We're not lookin', Bessie ; so don't be shy," urged his mother, with rustic playfulness.

"Kiss Martin when he wants you, and ha' done wi't," growled John Peters, from his corner.

But Bessie had long ago resolved that the lips of no man, save one, should ever be permitted to touch her cheek in future, and she resisted so strenuously that Martin had to give it up, considerably crestfallen at being denied what the free and easy manners of his circle regarded as so trivial a thing.

"Dang it, Bessie, if I'd known you were gettin' so stuck up that you can't spare a kiss for an old friend, I'm blest if I'd ha' taken the trouble to coom to tell you there's goin' to be a grand ball at the Hall, and we're invited, and we want you to coom wi' us—if so be as you're not too proud."

"Proud !" said John Peters, angrily. "Don't ye fret yourself, Martin. She'll come to her senses presently, never fear."

Bessie debated within herself what to do, pleasure and pain being equally present within her at the news—pleasure at the thought of going to Maurice's home ; pain at the idea of only being there in a subordinate position in the company of these vulgar Bowmans. But the wish to see, and, perhaps, speak to Maurice, finally carried the day, and she promised to go, to Martin's unconcealed delight.

Mrs. Carrington, eager to conciliate her neighbours, with a view to Maurice's probable standing for Parliament before long, had strewn her invitations with no sparing hand ; and a huge crowd of tenants, tradespeople, and other dependents, with a sprinkling of the gentry of the county, was the result. It was such a gathering as is only possible in the country ; and if the rustic ideas of costume made the hostess bite her lips to hide a smile, her guests in other ways were inoffensive. Their manners might be boisterous, and their notions of dancing archaic ; but they were very ready to be amused, and entered into the spirit of the thing with such zest that it made her labours very easy.

Bessie's heart beat fast as she followed her companions into the long ball-room.

Brilliantly lighted and decorated with hot-house plants, it seemed to her like fairy-land. She had never seen anything so beautiful before. As if in a dream, she watched Mrs. Carrington, suave and smiling in her black velvet and diamonds, shake hands effusively with Mrs. Bowman, Martin, and the Misses Bowman—two blowsy, giggling girls, whose costumes were about the loudest in the room. Then Mrs. Bowman pushed her forward, and in confusion she shyly slid her hand into the widow's firm grasp. She thought that Mrs. Carrington looked rather hard at her, as well she might, at seeing her so totally different from her companions. Bessie had wisely allowed her innate refinement to govern her choice of a dress, and rejecting the gaudy colours and many trimmings of the Bowman girls, looked, in her simple white muslin, with a red rose presented by Martin, not only pretty but distinguished.

And then the floor seemed to burst into a bloom of roses, and a celestial music sounded in her ears, as the lights swam before her dazzled eyes. He was coming! Another minute and he was in their midst. He looked very handsome in his careful evening dress, and more experienced eyes than poor little Bessie's found the young Squire the most attractive object in the room that night. As he shook hands with her companions, who were old acquaintances, Bessie's famished gaze devoured every inch of his face and figure.

Years after, she could recall every minutest detail: the gardenia in his button-hole, the pattern of his watch-chain, the single eye-glass which dangled over his white waistcoat, the artistic curls of his brown hair, which, had she but known it, were not without assistance from the skilful curling-tongs of his valet. Bessie thought them more lovely than anything she had ever seen, and would have cheerfully died then and there in order to possess one.

After a good deal of laughing and talking, each of the Bowman girls permitted him to inscribe his name on her programme for a dance; and then, to Bessie's great mortification, he hurried off to greet some fresh arrivals, so that she was left out in the cold without so much as a touch of his hand. She wished she had not come, and angrily snubbed Martin when he tried to make things pleasant for her in his clumsy way.

"I don't know why you're so cross, Bessie; but I can tell you, you look real

pretty to-night," observed the young farmer, as they concluded a scurrying polka. Bessie only tossed her head in reply, with a bitter sense of her own impotence. What was the use of looking pretty, if Maurice did not notice her? She watched him going about the room, chatting to the old women, dancing with the young ones, and more especially with a graceful girl in pink who belonged to the county set, until she wished she had never been born. Bertha Haskett's pupil was quite out of her element that night. The vulgarity of the people she knew sickened her; and to watch the great ladies and their cavaliers enjoying themselves, floating easily through the dances of which the rustics made such hard work, rendered her more miserable still. Fretful and discontented, she repulsed Martin, and the other young men who would have been glad to dance with her; and sighed for the unattainable in the shape of Maurice Carrington.

Her melancholy face, as she sat moping in a corner, at last caught her hostess's eye; and next time she encountered her son, she caught him by the sleeve.

"Maurice, there's a poor little thing there who has scarcely danced at all to-night. Can't you find a partner for her, or give her a turn yourself?"

"I was going to have this one with Dora; and these rustics are so dreadful to dance with," he complained peevishly. "They drag me about all over the place, until I feel quite exhausted. They can't waltz. Galops and polkas are the only things they seem to care for, and I do hate them so!"

But he allowed himself to be persuaded by his mother, who led him up to Bessie and introduced him, although she had quite forgotten the girl's name. When the miller's niece saw the gardenia bending over her, her first wish was that the floor would open and swallow her up. Then, in desperation, she rose and took his arm.

"It's a polka," he said, resignedly, as the music began. "You can't waltz, I suppose?"

"Yes, I can," she returned quietly.

She had learnt that accomplishment at school.

"We'll waltz it, then," he answered, visibly relieved; and amid the wild gyrations of the rest, that smoothly-gliding couple were a relief to many an eye. They did not talk much; Bessie was too shy, and he was absorbed in thoughts of Dora Yorke, the pretty girl in pink. But it was

rapture to Bessie to feel his arm encircling her waist, his firm young fingers grasping her gloved hand; and that dance ever after remained one of the brightest spots in her life. He took her into the supper-room and supplied her with refreshments, which she was too nervous to enjoy, making conversation the while upon such topics as were best adapted to the comprehension of a simple country maiden. Then he took her back to the ball-room, where, for the rest of the evening she got on better; for young Carrington, having found out that she waltzed well, introduced her to some of his own particular chums, who patronised the unassuming girl until the Misses Bowman were green with envy at seeing how well little plainly-dressed Bessie was succeeding among the gentlemen.

"Do you feel inclined for another turn?" Maurice carelessly asked, meeting Bessie, on her last partner's arm, in a doorway, as the musicians were playing the opening bars of the concluding dance. Her foolish heart leaped up as she answered that she should be very happy; basely deserting poor Martin, to whom she had promised this last galop. She felt so ineffably flattered that Maurice should choose her, of all the girls there, for his partner, that she would not have changed places with any queen alive. Poor child! He merely asked her because Dora Yorke, to whom he had been engaged, had been obliged to leave early, and all the other girls of his own set were already provided with partners.

"I hope you have enjoyed yourself!" he said, pleasantly, as the music stopped.

She gave one upward glance at him, which struck even him, in the self-absorption of confident young manhood, as peculiar, and answered, breathlessly, "Oh! so much!"

"I am glad to hear it," he affably assured her, as he shook hands; and, mechanically, Bessie followed the Bowmans to the big lumbering vehicle in which they had come.

She said nothing during the drive home, but sat in a dream, alike oblivious of the chaff of the girls about her having "danced with all the swells," and Martin's anger at her cavalier treatment of him. A pair of grey eyes, a gardenia, a dangling eyeglass, filled all her thoughts.

Her dream was destined to have a rude awakening. She was to stay a day or two at the farm before returning home, and as

she followed her hostess into the small front sitting-room, Martin said, suddenly:

"Have you heard the news, Bessie?"

"What news?" she returned, coldly.

"Why, there's goin' to be a weddin' at the Hall, soon. Th' young Squoire's engaged to Miss Yorke, that young lady in pink everybody saw he is so sweet upon, and his mother says they're to be married in April."

"I'm very tired," said Bessie, in a spent voice, as the dingy little room swam around her. "If you don't mind, I think I had better go to bed."

But, when she had safely locked her door upon the outer world, no sleep came to visit her haggard eyes. On her knees, with her face hidden in the bedclothes, she passed through such an agony as it is given to few girls of seventeen to know. Her grief, of course, was absurdly irrational, and she felt it to be so, even amid its deepest pangs; but the thought of seeing Maurice married to another woman was more than she could endure. It was the death-knell of all her hopes; if hopes they could be called, of which she had all along known the utter futility. It took away all purpose from her life. There was no use, now, in cultivating her mind, and trying to perfect her manners. There was nothing left to live for. As long as Maurice remained unmarried she could cherish the illusion that, some day in the future, when by some magical transformation she had become beautiful, accomplished, and in every way worthy of him, he might fall in love with her; but now she could no longer deceive herself. The dream of her youth would never be realised. The dead level of village monotony was to be hers all her life, without a glimpse of anything better.

"Unless," thought she at last, as she began to unfasten her crumpled ball-dress, "Unless I leave Graybourne, and try to make a way for myself. But, whatever I do, I will be worthy of him! Even if I can never marry him, I will still be worthy of him! I will raise myself to his level, not sink to that of the people here!"

A great passion must always be unselfish; and the little village girl, had she but known it, was in that moment little less than sublime. Quixotic, perhaps; but still sublime in her intention never to do anything that might degrade her in the eyes of the man she loved, even though they never met again.